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COUNTRY Indochina

DATE DISTR. 13 September 1948

SUBJECT Non-Vietnamese Military and Semi-Military Units
Connected with the Viet Nam Army

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1. Large numbers of Chinese in the Viet Minh zones have been deprived of their normal occupation because of military circumstances or economic conditions. In order to take care of this group and at the same time use them effectively, the Viet Nam Government has formed them into a labor force to cultivate formerly idle land. This land has been allotted as "concessions" to the Chinese communities. As these concessions may be subject to French attack the Vietnamese Government has allowed the Chinese workers to form protective military units. These units are known as Hoa-Kieu-Tu-Ve-Doan (Overseas Chinese Self-Defense Units). Their function is to protect the land and the collective of which they are a part. [REDACTED] Comment. The name Tu-Ve in this instance is interesting. The ordinary Tu-Ve was incorporated into the regular Army of Viet Nam in 1947 but the Tu-Ve units, while operating under the Army, did not lose their identity. There is another semi-military organization which exists in various localities, the Dan-Quan. The Dan-Quan is intended to be a local self-defense corps capable of operating in isolated units deprived of any central command. In Viet Minh controlled areas they are somewhat the equivalent of the old Tu-Ve. In zones occupied by the French they go underground and become the equivalent of partisans. It should be noted that both the Dan-Quan and the Tu-Ve are purely Vietnamese. The Overseas Chinese units are more or less the equivalent of the Dan-Quan; but inasmuch as they are Chinese rather than Vietnamese they have been given the special name of Hoa-Kieu-Tu-Ve-Doan.)
2. Attached to the Regular Army of Viet Nam are units called Commando Ngoai Quoc (Foreign Commandos). They are comparatively well-uniformed, equipped, and fed. They are the object of special solicitude on the part of the Army and are provided with newspapers especially printed in their own languages. Musical and theatrical performances are organized for their amusement. In general, they are French or German. The French are deserters from various French units and the Germans are deserters from the Foreign Legion. These commandos requested to be used as shock troops but the Viet Minh High Command has reserved them for other purposes.

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